



Community Health Improvement Process

**2014-2015 Community Health Needs Assessment
Community Conversation in Mandarin Chinese
Robert Frost Middle School, Rockville, MD
September 26, 2015**

Introduction

Healthy Montgomery hosted a community conversation on health and well-being at Robert Frost Middle School on Saturday, September 26, 2015. The conversation was hosted in collaboration with the Chinese American Parents and Students Association (CAPSA) and took place from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm in Rockville, MD. There were 23 participants. The conversation was facilitated in Mandarin Chinese by Lily Shen.

The community conversation included a discussion of what is meant by health and well-being at the individual and community levels, elements of a healthy community, community assets and challenges in Montgomery County, and practical steps to improve the health and well-being of the community. Participants engaged in both large and small group discussion, and were also offered the opportunity to contribute comments and feedback regarding the meeting in writing.

Defining Health and Well-Being

To start the conversation, participants were asked to collectively define health, sense of well-being and to describe a community with optimal health and well-being. To the participants, health not only means good physical health but also mental health. Good health leads to a sense of well being. Well being means having positive experiences and thus leads to happiness. Things that help them to be healthy are clean air, quality and safety of food, effective health care, a safe, friendly and stress-free environment in addition to good schools. Easy access to public transportation and affordable housing are very important too.

In order to achieve a community with optimal health and well being, the participants think that there should be ample gyms and sport facilities for residents to take advantage of at minimal cost or no cost. The environment should be a green with parks, trails and a lot of grassy areas and trees. There should be an effective and affordable health care system where people know how, when and where to seek medical help. There should be easy access to buses and the metro so people can get around and become less dependent on cars. This community should also include affordable housing where people can own their own homes and good schools where children and adults can learn and grow.

Assets that Support Health and Well-Being

Participants identified the services, activities and other characteristics of their community that allow residents to be healthy and have a sense of well being.



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- A clean community
- Clean Air
- Quality of education (Montgomery County Public Schools and post secondary education)
- Libraries (various activities and books in their own language)
- Safety (low crime rate, feel safe to walk)
- Location of government agencies, easy to get to
- Stable economy
- Close proximity of hospital (Shady Grove)
- Shopping mall (Montgomery Mall, movie theater, and outlet)
- Diverse community
- Trees almost everywhere
- Existing parks (Black Hill, Lake Needwood, Seneca Creek State Park)
- Lots of restaurants and grocery stores
- New housing development
- Non-profit community groups aimed at helping new immigrants (ex. CAPSA, The Chinese Culture and Community Service Center, Inc., etc.)
- Consumer protection (safety of food, return/refund /exchange policy)
- Museums are free
- Recycling program
- Privacy, laws to protect residents

Barriers to Health and Well-Being

Participants also identified the challenges that make healthy living difficult.

- Too many cars on the road, frequent traffic congestions
- Crazy/fast drivers
- High toll fees
- Slow snow removal in some residential area
- Not enough lighting, some roads are really dark at night
- Language barrier for new immigrants
- Not enough free English classes for immigrants, hard for restaurant workers to participate
- Unaware of services and resources in the county, only heard them through friends
- Expensive housing and rentals
- Long wait for affordable housing
- Bus schedule (too far apart)
- Bikes on the road create danger, should have separate bike lanes
- Limited number of community centers
- Not enough low cost health clinics, people tend to avoid going to doctors because of language barrier and the cost
- Not enough exercise facilities (tennis court, swimming pool, tracks)
- Expensive after school care/day care



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- Expensive health insurance
- High tax

Practical Steps to Improve Health and Well-Being

Participants identified actions to improve the health and well-being in their community. Participants prioritized these actions by voting. *Each participant was given 5 stickers to place besides the suggestions that were most important to them. They could use all 5 stickers on one particular action or spread their stickers across 5 different actions or another combination.*

1. Build additional health centers that offer low cost health care/vaccines. (21 votes)
2. Offer more adult English classes at various levels in more areas and at different times during the day. (20 votes)
3. Hire additional bilingual staff (Asian languages) at local government agencies. (18 votes)
4. Better marketing of county resources and services in different languages via local newspapers, libraries, grocery stores, churches, restaurants. To go further with this idea, maybe a “Resident Center” housed in the libraries where residents can go to the center and find out what resources and services are available in the county. (17 votes)
5. Job training for new immigrants. (14 votes)
6. Build additional community centers where families can spend quality time together playing sports or to workout.
7. Stress the importance of preventive healthcare by doing workshops; maybe partner with churches and community groups to reach out to more people.
8. Bus schedules are far apart, riders have to wait a long time to catch a bus, should consider revising the ones that don’t have too many riders, increase those that have high ridership so if a person misses one bus, he/she can get into the next one fairly quickly.
9. Build bike lanes for cyclists.
10. Reduce toll fees to increase usage of ICC and other highways.
11. Build more affordable houses and have more low cost rentals.



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12. Low cost after school programs and day care should be in every elementary school; instead of quitting jobs, parents can utilize them.
13. People are confused about how snow removal is prioritized. Some participants had to wait several days before their roads were plowed, while other participants had no complaints. Snow removal information should be distributed to the residents ahead of time so people know how to prepare for it.

Community Conversation Feedback

Participants were provided an opportunity to give written feedback about the meeting. In a short closeout survey, participants were asked, "Is there anything else that you want us to know, including what you like or did not like about this community conversation?"

Only 1 participant completed the form with the following comment:

"This is my first time attending a meeting like this, it is quite interesting and I feel like my opinions will be heard."